

# BUY BUY, BABY

**BO**

Exodus 10:1-13:16

## Cast of Characters

Jonathan

Father

Player #1 (Advisor #1)

Player #2 (Advisor #2)

Player #3

Player #4 (Moses)

Player #5 (Pharaoh)

Player #6 (Aaron)

*(Jonathan is on stage in casual clothes as his Father enters.)*

**FATHER:** Jonathan, we're leaving soon. Get dressed.

**JONATHAN:** I am dressed. *(Checks himself out.)* Aren't I?

**FATHER:** I mean . . . get dressed up in your nicest clothes. We're going to your cousin Michael's Pidyon HaBen.

**JONATHAN:** I'm not going! Michael cried so much the last time. I felt so bad for him.

**FATHER:** *(Laughs.)* Oh no, Jonathan. That was Michael's Brit Milah. A Pidyon HaBen is different . . . and completely painless.

**JONATHAN:** What is a Pidyon HaBen?

**FATHER:** When the first child in the family is a boy, he has a Pidyon HaBen on the thirtieth day after his birth. On that day, his parents give the Rabbi a small amount of money in order to "buy" the child back from God.

**JONATHAN:** Why? Does God own babies?

**FATHER:** Not exactly. Now get dressed. I don't want to be late.

*(Father exits.)*

**JONATHAN:** I wonder why Moms and Dads have to buy their babies back from God? And why only boys . . . and why only the first one born?

*(Six Players enter. Jonathan is surprised.)*

**PLAYER #1:** Those are very good questions, Jonathan.

**JONATHAN:** Thanks. Now I have two more questions. Who are you, and what are you doing here?

**PLAYER #1:** We are the Pidyon HaBen Players. We go around the world helping children understand what a Pidyon HaBen is all about.

**JONATHAN:** What awesome timing! I'm going to a Pidyon HaBen today — for my cousin Michael. But I don't really understand what a Pidyon HaBen is.

**PLAYER #2:** No problem. Sit back, relax, and we'll bring history to life!

**JONATHAN:** That sounds like it's going to take a long time. And my Dad says we have to leave soon.

**PLAYER #3:** Don't worry. We'll go fast.

**PLAYER #4:** It all starts with Bo.

**JONATHAN:** Bo who?

**PLAYER #5:** Bo's the name of a parashah in the Book of Exodus. Have you heard of Exodus?

**JONATHAN:** Sure! That's the book in which we learn the story of Passover . . . when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt to Pharaoh.

**PLAYER #6:** Very good, Jonathan! And in Bo, God explains all the laws of Passover to Moses.

**JONATHAN:** Wow! But what does that have to do with a Pidyon HaBen?

**PLAYER #1:** Watch and you will see. Now, when Bo begins, God has already brought seven plagues upon Egypt.

**PLAYER #2:** Blood, gnats, beetles, cattle disease, boils, and hail.

**JONATHAN:** You forgot frogs! (*Sings.*) Frogs here, frogs there . . .

**ALL PLAYERS:** Frogs are jumping everywhere!

**FATHER:** (*From offstage.*) Jonathan! What's all that noise?

**JONATHAN:** Nothing, Dad! (*To the players.*) We better get a move on.

**PLAYER #3:** Even after all those plagues, Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites leave Egypt.

**PLAYER #4 (MOSES):** So, Moses . . . that's me . . . went to see Pharaoh.

**PLAYER #5 (PHARAOH):** That would be me.

**MOSES:** Pharaoh, I have been sent here by God to tell you to let my people go.

**PHARAOH:** Come on, Moses. Can't you at least be original? You use that line every time — Let my people go . . . Let my people go.

**PLAYER #6 (AARON):** It's a good line. Short and to the point. Incidentally, lest you forgot, I'm Aaron, the brother of Moses.

**PHARAOH:** Moses, why do you always bring your brother Aaron?

**AARON:** He needs me to talk for him. He's slow of speech and slow of tongue.

**PHARAOH:** Could have fooled me. And my answer is no, no, no!

**ALL PLAYERS:** (*Sing.*) I will not let them go!

**FATHER:** (*Offstage.*) Jonathan!

**JONATHAN:** (*To the players.*) Shh!

**MOSES:** Well, Pharaoh, if you won't let my people go, God will spread millions and millions of locusts upon the land. They will eat all the crops. Your people will be hungry and poor.

**PHARAOH:** Why should I believe that?

**PLAYER #1 (ADVISOR #1):** Uh, your Highness . . .

**PLAYER #2 (ADVISOR #2):** Your Majesty . . .

**PHARAOH:** Yes, trusted Advisors?

**PLAYER #1:** May I be so bold as to remind you that so far every single thing this Moses guy has said has come true. Our country can't take another plague.

**PLAYER #2:** I can't take another plague! The hail destroyed my roof . . . my cows are so sick they won't even moo anymore . . . and my wife has a boil on her nose the size of a pyramid.

**PLAYER #1:** The suffering must stop. Let his people go!

**PHARAOH:** Okay, Moses . . . you can go.

**MOSES:** Pharaoh . . . you're a prince!

**PHARAOH:** Actually, I'm a king. But your wives and children must stay.

**MOSES:** No! We all must go.

**PHARAOH:** Sorry. That's my final offer. *(To his advisors.)* Advisors, look at that large cloud coming this way. There was no rain in the weather forecast for today.

**PLAYER #2:** That's no cloud, oh Great One. That's a swarm of locusts!

**PHARAOH:** *(To Moses.)* Okay, okay. I get the message. Your people can go. After you get rid of those locusts.

**PLAYER #1:** You're going to need an awfully large can of bug spray!

**AARON:** Moses does not need bug spray! God is on our side.

*(Moses waves his hand and looks at Pharaoh.)*

**MOSES:** The locusts have left Egypt. Now it's our turn!

**PHARAOH:** Not so fast. I changed my mind. Oh my! Who turned out the lights!

**PLAYER #2:** It's very dark in here!

**PLAYER #1:** I want my mommy!

**MOSES:** This is the ninth plague. Darkness all across the land of Egypt. And only you can bring the light back . . . by letting . . .

**PHARAOH:** Your people go . . . I know, I know. Okay. You can go. You and your wives and children. Now can you turn the sun back on? *(Moses waves his hand.)* That's better! What good's a fancy palace if you can't see it?

**MOSES:** Come on Aaron, round up the cattle!

**PHARAOH:** Hold on? Who said anything about cattle?

**MOSES:** We need our cattle to make sacrifices to God.

**PHARAOH:** You are so greedy! Forget it! You can't go!

**AARON:** That's not fair!

**PHARAOH:** When you are the Pharaoh, you don't have to be fair!

**MOSES:** You'll be sorry.

**PLAYER #3:** And so God brought one last plague to Egypt. Do you know what that was, Jonathan?

**JONATHAN:** The slaying of the firstborn?

**PLAYER #3:** Yes. It was a terrible plague. The firstborn of every Egyptian died that night. But the children of Israel were spared, because they followed the instructions God gave to Moses.

**MOSES:** *(Speaking as if giving a lecture.)* You must place the blood of a lamb on your doorposts. Then the Angel of Death will know to pass over your houses tonight . . . and will spare the lives of your sons.

**JONATHAN:** And that's why they call it Passover, right? Because the Angel of Death passed over our houses . . . and saved our lives.

**PLAYER #3:** That's right. And in Parashat Bo, God gives Moses all the laws about how to celebrate Passover.

**JONATHAN:** Like . . . about eating matzah so that we remember how the Israelites left Egypt so quickly there was no time for bread to rise.

**PLAYER #3:** Very good, Jonathan.

**JONATHAN:** But what about Pidyon HaBen? You said that was explained in Bo, too.

**AARON:** It is. At the end of the parashah, God tells Moses that every firstborn boy in a family belongs to God. And that family must "buy" the child back from God.

**JONATHAN:** How much do they have to pay?

**MOSES:** One lamb.

**JONATHAN:** I wonder where my aunt and uncle are going to get a lamb.

**MOSES:** Five coins will also do. The important thing is that every generation should remember what God did to rescue the Children of Israel from slavery.

**PLAYER #3:** Now do you understand what a Pidyon HaBen is?

**JONATHAN:** Yes! And I can't wait to explain to my Dad! Uh oh, Dad . . . he'll be so angry when he sees I haven't changed clothes yet.

*(The Players quickly put a jacket over Jonathan's shoulders and Father enters.)*

**FATHER:** Jonathan, are you ready to go?

**JONATHAN:** Yes, Dad. But first I want you to meet my new friends . . . *(When Jonathan turns, the Players have exited and are gone.)*

**FATHER:** What friends, Jonathan?

**JONATHAN:** Never mind. Dad? Did you have a Pidyon HaBen for me?

**FATHER:** Of course. You were our firstborn. You are very precious to us.

**JONATHAN:** How did you pay for me? With a lamb or five shekels?

**FATHER:** Five shekels, of course. But where did you get the idea that it could have been a lamb?

**JONATHAN:** Don't worry. I'll explain it to you.

*(They head off. hand in hand.)*